

## Traffic congestion is matter of time

The latest "good news/bad news" on the M-5 bridge reconstruction over Farmington Road: Good news: Workers on Tuesday appeared to be halfway through the task of taking out the old deck on the eastbound side of the bridge, which is causing a greater-than-usual bottleneck for traffic passing beneath it.

More good news: Posen Construction Co. of Utica, the contractor, said work will be halted on the project for the Friday-Sunday July 4 holiday weekend.

Bad news: The final completion date for the project is Oct. 2 — if then — and not late August, as had been hoped.

The project manager told me the scheduled contract completion date is Oct. 2," said Paul Smith, assistant to City of Farmington Public Services Director Kevin Gushman. "He said it's always been Oct. 2."

However, noted Smith, the date seems to fluctuate week to week as workers are pulled off the job and put at other sites.

Nevertheless, the project manager told Smith "he thinks it will be done by Oct. 2, but said he wouldn't put it in writing."

As for this holiday weekend, the Michigan Department of Transportation said all road and bridge work statewide would be suspended where possible from 3 p.m. Thursday to 6 a.m. Monday. This includes work on the Orchard Lake M-5 overpass in Farmington Hills.

Smith noted the removal of the old decks on the M-5 bridge above Farmington Road appeared halfway completed Tuesday.

That work causes the most traffic congestion for vehicles traveling north and south on Farmington Road, he said.

The project crew is "trying to

make open lanes" for traffic "and yet not have cars hit by falling concrete," Smith said. The dual tasks of tearing out the old bridge and keeping traffic flowing below is difficult for the crew, too, Smith said.

Up until Monday, when the crew began tearing out the decking, "the delays haven't been bad at all," he added.

Farmington City Manager Frank Lauhoff said he's hoping for "an early completion to this thing, because they started in February" due to the unusually warm winter in southeast Michigan.

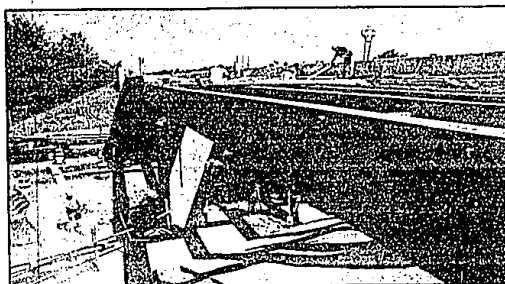
He noted there have been some non-weather-related delays, such as the debate over replacing the unexpectedly worn-out steel girders with either pre-cast concrete or new steel girders. New steel finally won.

But he acknowledged that the end will come "maybe not in late August." At present, he said, workers have put the prime coat on the steel understructure but must wait for the new concrete bed before putting on the final coat.

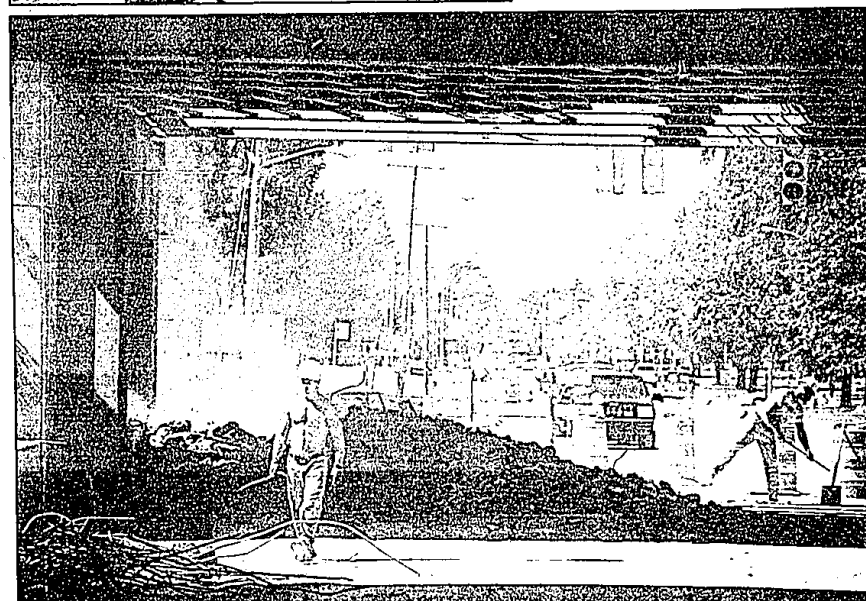
He said the city "got complaints in the beginning" about traffic jams at the site, but then Posen Contracting of Utica, the general contractor, "made some changes" such as eliminating left turns that were causing traffic backups.

"The contractor's been fairly efficient about the whole thing, and that's helped traffic," Lauhoff said.

Still undetermined, though, is how the roadwork's progress will affect visitors driving to the Farmington Founders Festival, which will draw thousands of craft-shoppers, entertainment-seekers and parade-goers to the downtown July 9-12.



## M-5 bridge facelift turns into overhaul



Girding for gridlock: Bridge construction on Farmington and Nine Mile is projected to be finished in October. For motorists that means bottlenecks at the intersection. However, construction will halt for the July 4 weekend.

## Farmington High teacher lent voice of inspiration to students

Singing, teaching and athletics were central to the life of Tarmo K. Maattala, with singing perhaps holding the edge.

"He sang right up to this past December" and was looking forward to doing more, said Bertha Maattala of her husband of 43 years.

But a brief bout with liver cancer forever silenced the tenor voice of the retired Farmington High School teacher and coach. He died at age 84 on June 25 at Hospice Home of Farmington Hills, where he had been for 10 days.

"He was happy and out of pain and he died with dignity," she said.

A memorial service for Maattala is scheduled for 2 p.m. Saturday, July 26, at the Finnish Center, 35200 W. Eight Mile in Farmington Hills. The Rev. John Maki of the Salem United Church of Christ will officiate.

Memorials may be made to the Finnish Center Association at that address.

Maattala, of Finnish extraction, was remembered by former students for his sense of humor and dedication to teaching.

"He was a Finn from the UP (Upper Peninsula) and he would tell Finnish jokes all the time," recalled one student, Jean Anderson Branzel.

"Whenever anybody needed a master of ceremonies, they chose Maatt," said Branzel. He also wrote humorous articles for

Finnish and Farmington papers that were popular with readers, she said.

Branzel, who was Maattala's boss as director of the Arpi Swedish Male Chorus of Detroit for 10 years, said she could "always depend on him to be the lead" because he read sheet music.

He was an officer in the chorus for most of the 49 years he was in it. He last sang with them in a Swedish Christmas program in December, according to his widow.

But it was through his 30 years as government and economics teacher and also as a coach that Maattala touched the most lives.

Terry Sever, Farmington Hills councilman, remembered Maattala as "kindhearted and sincere about kids getting a good education."

"He came from the old school and really cared about pupils doing well."

"I wasn't the best student but he made sure I understood what he was trying to teach in government."

Something may have stuck, Sever mused: he has served 13 years on the Hills council.

Dick Tupper, FHS Class of 1950, current City of Farmington Board of Appeals member and former city councilman almost 20 years, including two stints as mayor, recalled Maattala as a "nice guy, very fair."

"My memories of him are very positive," he said.

Born in Newcastle, Pa., in 1914, Maattala grew up in the UP, graduating from Suomi Junior College and then earned his bachelor's degree at Northern Michigan University. He earned a master's in education at Wayne University and later was a supervising teacher for both the University of Michigan and Michigan State.

He taught six years at Redridge, Mich., and was teacher and coach at Lincoln Junior High in Manistee for two years before coming to Farmington.

Among other notable students he taught or coached were Ralph Yoder, a former Farmington mayor now living in Florida; Rex Cawley, 400-meter hurdles champion in the Japan Olympics; Ron Short, a state pole/vault champion; and Don Nichols, staff member at Oakland Community College at Orchard Ridge.

Maattala was a board member of several organizations, including the Swedish Club and the Finnish Historical Society and also was an Elk and Eagle.

Besides wife Bertha, he is survived by daughters, Marjorie (Marc) Bilker of Denver, Colo., and Carole Maattala of Farmington Hills and son Michael, also of Farmington Hills. Carole and Michael were his children by Sadie, his first wife, who died of cancer.

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## Corvette raffle ticket sale shifts into gear

One lucky ticket holder will win a free two-year Smart Lease Plus on a new Corvette coupe and \$5,000 or \$30,000 cash in the annual Farmington/Farmington Hills Chamber of Commerce Fantasy Corvette Raffle.

You can purchase a \$100 raffle ticket between now and July 12. Only 1,000 tickets will be available. In addition to the grand prize, nine other cash prizes totaling \$3,600 will be awarded. Your odds of winning cash are 1 in 100!

The Fantasy Corvette or \$30,000 will be raffled off for the

12th year at the conclusion of the Farmington Founders Festival, 8 p.m. Sunday, July 12, during the Surfin' Safari Beach Party at the Costik Activities Center in Farmington Hills.

Two admission tickets for the Beach Party are available to everyone who purchases a Fantasy Beach Raffle ticket. This event, which will be held from 6-9 p.m., will feature music, interactive entertainment and summer picnic fare.

If \$100 is too steep, consider purchasing a shared ticket and splitting both the cost of the

ticket and winnings with your friends or co-workers. Increase your odds by purchasing more than one ticket.

In an office of six, each person can own a piece of three tickets with an individual contribution of just \$50 each.

Raffle tickets are available by calling the chamber office at 474-3440, Ext. 24, and at Harts & Roses, Huntington Danks Farmington Hills, LOC Federal Credit Union, Maxi Collision, Pogo's Food & Spirits, and Papa John's Pizza. Ticket buyers must be at least 21 years of age.